

FRANCIS ROONEY

19TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

FRANCISROONEY.HOUSE.GOV

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0919

120 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2536

3299 TAMiami TRAIL EAST, SUITE 105
NAPLES, FL 34112
(239) 252-6225

1039 SE 9TH AVENUE, SUITE 308
CAPE CORAL, FL 33990
(239) 599-6033

August 24, 2018

Administrator Linda McMahon
Small Business Administration
409 Third Street, SW, Suite 7900
Washington, DC 20416

Dear Administration McMahon:

I write today urgently requesting that you issue an Administrative declaration of a disaster for Lee County due to the current toxic algae blooms and red tide impacting Southwest Florida. Your approval of this request and subsequent disaster assistance loans are imperative to keeping small businesses open and helping them recover from this crisis. Southwest Florida is facing a difficult and prolonged challenge which will take time and significant resources to overcome.

Less than one year ago, Hurricane Irma made landfall in Southwest Florida causing major damage and leaving our citizens hopeless going into the vital winter economic season. Because of their resilience, our citizens overcame Hurricane Irma and had a successful year.

Now they face another overwhelming crisis. Unusually large spring and summer rainfall, and one tropical depression, have generated massive discharges from Lake Okeechobee which have brought toxic algal blooms to our community, crippling our local economy and inflicting serious environmental destruction. The numerous, continuing fish kills which are washing dead grouper, dolphins and sea turtles onto our beaches have caused, and continue to cause, massive loss of income to our real estate and tourism industries. To make matters even worse, we have been plagued by a lingering red tide just off our beaches which has been exacerbated by the algal blooms. Florida's tourism economy generates over 17% of our state's employment and 55% of all real estate in Florida could potentially be impacted.

I urge you to grant an Administrative declaration of a disaster as soon as possible. The environment is devastated, and the people of Southwest Florida are overwhelmed, frustrated and in need of relief. An emergency disaster declaration is imperative to save our communities.

Sincerely,



Francis Rooney
Member of Congress